Instruct-O-Gram

THE HANDS-ON TRAINING GUIDE
FOR THE FIRE INSTRUCTOR

The "Safety Engine" RIT Search Operations, Part II

Hands-On Training:

ACTIVITY NO. 1

This exercise is a modified version of an exercise conducted by Chesterfield County Fire and EMS, which was recently posted on Firehouse.com news.

(Step 1)

Utilizing an acquired structure with a large open space i.e. warehouse, gymnasium, etc. (preferably a structure that participants are unfamiliar with) participants should be instructed to bring their personal protective clothing including: Helmet, gloves, hood, coat, pants, boots, etc. (an S.C.B.A. filled to approximately 700psi. should be provided for each participant).

(Step 2)

Individually provide the following instructions to the participants: "You are the OIC of the first engine operating at a fire in a shopping mall. You and your crew are stretching a 1 ∫" hand line at the top of the escalator on the second floor and you encounter "cold" smoke and zero visibility. While maintaining voice contact with your crew, you begin searching for the fire. You no longer have voice contact with your crew and are now lost and disoriented. This is not a training scenario, your life depends on your actions!"

(Step 3)

Prior to entering the structure, have the participant hook in or begin breathing air from his/her S.C.B.A., escort the (blind folded/blacked out face piece) participant into the structure (walk around in circles to get them disoriented prior to starting the scenario). Participants should be provided with a hand held radio and any miscellaneous items they routinely carry in their personal protective clothing. No additional tools or equipment shall be provided.

(Step 4)
Participants should be evaluated on self-survival techniques; such as:

1. Initiation of a "Mayday" / Activation of their emergency distress button (if applicable)
2. Ability to remain calm, preserve their air supply
3. Immediate activation of their P.A.S.S. Alarm
4. Attempt to report the problem to Command or rescuing personnel.
5. Organized effort/method to search for an exit, hose line, lifeline to safety.
6. Attempts to search for an area of safety.
7. Personal positioning (if unable to locate an exit)
8. Utilization of personal equipment to assist rescuers in locating him/her

(Step 5)
Document the actions of each participant (including times, actions, etc.). Consideration should be given to filming each participant's actions to assist with the post-incident analysis.

(Step 6)
Conduct a post-incident analysis; review the actions of each of the participant, review the recommended actions and reinforce the purpose of the exercise. Please note: the post-incident analysis should not be used to embarrass or humiliate the participant, rather to reinforce the need to standardize and enhance our self-survival training efforts.

ACTIVITY NO. 2

(Step 1)
Utilizing an acquired structure or burn house training facility, simulate (using synthetic smoke) a reported structure fire with firefighter(s) trapped. The IC should immediately deploy the Safety Engine/ RIT personnel to initiate a search for the trapped firefighter(s)

(Step 2)
Safety Engine/RIT personnel should be instructed to initiate the above aforementioned techniques to determine the location of the trapped firefighter(s) prior to initiating the search effort.

(Step 3)
Upon determining the last known or known location of the trapped firefighter(s), the Safety Engine/ RIT Officer should specify the type of search to be initiated and follow the specified rescue action plan to locate and remove the trapped firefighter(s).

(Step 4)
Safety Engine/RIT personnel should be evaluated on:

1. Were the proper methods of determining the location of the trapped firefighter(s) followed?
2. Were all of the essential tasks accomplished prior to deployment (i.e. back-up lines, secondary means of egress, staged resources, etc.)?
3. Were all personnel adequately accounted for throughout the deployment operation?
4. Were proper search procedures/techniques followed during the Safety Engine/RIT crew search operation?
5. Did the Safety Engine/RIT Officer establish a tractable means of access/egress throughout the search operation?
6. Did the Safety Engine/RIT crew initiate the search in a timely manner?
7. Were all personnel properly removed and accounted for following the extraction of the trapped firefighter(s)?

(Step 5)
Perform a post-incident analysis, review, revise, and implement recommended changes modifications to the established search procedures based on your findings.

SUMMARY:

Although Safety Engine/RIT search operations have several common factors related to the everyday civilian searches, several very critical differences must be made known. First and foremost, civilian search searches deal with a large number of unknown facts; firefighter searches often times provide us the opportunity to identify factual information that may enhance our search efforts. Implementation and training on standardized lost/trapped firefighter actions creates predictability thereby enhancing the likelihood of a quick and effective rescue. Secondly, the Safety Engine/RIT search operations MUST BE tractable not only for the search crews, but also for subsequent crews who might be needed to assist in the removal process. Unlike most civilian rescues, we as firefighters, officers, and trainers must quickly realize that the initial Safety Engine/RIT crew typically will not remove the downed member; rather they will simply initiate the rescue process. The quicker we can get the secondary crews to the downed firefighter, the more successful the outcome is likely to be.

Safety Engine/RIT search operations cannot and should not be compromised by finances. Proper training and creativity will enable every fire department to be proficient in these techniques while finding unique and interesting methods to overcome the financial burdens we're destined to face should remain a top priority. In this program we have shared some very common and simple techniques to be utilized during a lost/trapped firefighter search; although some of the more complex searches may involve the purchase of additional equipment, the justification based on the lessons learned from our recent past is unquestionably obvious – firefighter rescue or firefighter(s) fatalities, the choice is yours.

Finally, the most important point to remember is, the success or failure of these aforementioned search techniques is dependent on continued training and practice. These techniques and/or ones similar to those mentioned in this program are destined to fail and quite possibly further complicate the rescue operation due to the extreme situations in which they are likely to be deployed. Be proactive, train regularly, and revise your search methods to enhance your survivability on the modern fire ground.

EXAMINATION:

This evaluation is based on the April 2004 Instruct-O-Gram Safety Engine/RIT Search Operations.

1. True or False – Safety Engine/RIT search operations should be conducted exactly like civilian searches?
   a. True
   b. False

2. There are _____ standardized basic rules to be followed if you become lost/trapped in a structure.
   a. 5
   b. 7
   c. 10
   d. None

3. A lost/trapped firefighter should initiate what immediately?
   a. "Mayday" request
   b. P.A.S.S.
   c. PAR
   d. None of the above

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4. According to the material provided there are _____ basic Safety Engine/RIT search techniques?
   a. 2
   b. 3
   c. 4
   d. 5

5. True or False – A lost or disoriented firefighter should attempt to search for an exit?
   a. True
   b. False

6. The most critical factor to be considered during a VES search is?
   a. Isolating the room by locating and closing the door to the room being searched.
   b. Determining whether to conduct a Right or Left hand search
   c. Ladder placement below the windowsill.
   d. Initiating positive pressure ventilation.

7. What Safety Engine/RIT search method is best used in small to medium sized structures?
   a. Tagline/Team Search
   b. Standard Right hand/Left hand search techniques
   c. Oriented Search Technique
   d. None of the above

8. The three critical factors to keep in mind when conducting a Safety Engine/RIT Search are?
   a. Speed
   b. Self-orientation
   c. Tractability
   d. All of the above

9. True/False - A TIC can be used to enhance all methods of search?
   a. True
   b. False

10. When using a TIC for search operations, Safety Engine/RIT personnel must also do what incase of a camera whiteout or mechanical failure?
    a. Initiate basic search techniques
    b. Maintain a tractable means of access and egress
    c. Maintain constant orientation within the structure
    d. Avoid tunnel vision
    e. All of the above

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EXAMINATION ANSWER KEY, **April/May 2004**

1. A	**2. C**	**3. A**	**4. D**	**5. A**
6. A	**7. C**	**8. D**	**9. A**	**10. E**

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